

AMST 167W.80 / ANTH 196W.80  
**Performance & Culture in the Americas**

Prof. Elaine Peña

Spring 2010

Time: TU/TR 3:55-4:45pm

Office Hours: Tuesday 1:30-3:30pm

Performance does not happen exclusively on stage or on the silver screen. Globally and locally, we interweave performances of class status, race, gender, sexuality, morality, and nationality into the way we experience culture everyday. Using an inter-American approach, this intensive writing course will introduce students to the idea of performance as a mode of analysis. Moreover, it will deepen their understanding of the links among everyday and extraordinary performances, cultural production, and socio-political circumstance.

Learning Objectives:

- 1) Students will be able to define performance and analyze it as both an object and a method of study.
- 2) Students will be able to understand how everyday and extraordinary performances and cultural production are inextricably linked in the continental U.S. and the Americas at large.
- 3) Students will enhance their awareness and appreciation for cultural difference by evaluating the economic, political, and social context of public action in terms of its historical and contemporary settings.
- 4) Students will practice how to discuss ideas critically through collaborative discussions.
- 5) Through the practice of writing and revising, students will acquire the skills to draft cogently argued papers analyzing key themes discussed throughout the semester.

Required Books:

Coco Fusco, ed. *Corpus Delecti: Performance Art of the Americas* (New York: Routledge, 2000).

Don Kulick, *Travesti: Sex, Gender, and Culture among Brazilian Transgendered Prostitutes* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998).

Richard Schechner, *Performance Studies: An Introduction* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (New York: Routledge, 2006).

Raymond Williams, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society*, revised ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985).

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

Participation (10%)

- ◆ Attendance: You may miss no more than two lectures or discussion sections.
- ◆ Attending Film Screenings (2) is MANDATORY

**W/Feb. 10, 2010      Film Screening: “THE HEART BROKEN IN HALF”**  
**W/Apr. 21, 2010      Film Screening: “TWILIGHT: LOS ANGELES”**

◆**Think Pieces:** This one page single-spaced document will not be graded. This is not a book report. It is a chance for you to make sense of the films you view outside of class. You must submit them to your TA after the lecture following the public screening.

### Writing Assignments (60%)

Each student will draft six 3-4 page essays every two-three weeks. Ideally, these papers should demonstrate your understanding on the themes and methodologies presented in the reading and in discussion. The paper should acknowledge arguments being made by authors but should not replicate them. These essays are an opportunity for you to advance an original and innovative perspective.

- Paper #1: Personal Reflection (1-2 page, 5%), draft due Jan. 26, paper due Feb. 2 [Prompt: Performance, Conquest, and *Reconquista*]
- Paper# 2: Ruminaton (1-2 pages, 5%) due Feb. 9, 2010 [Prompt: Performance Studies and Cultural Production]
- Paper #3: Reading Response (3 pages, 15%) draft due Feb. 23, due March 2 [Prompt: Thick Description and Radical Interventions]
- Paper #4: Reading Response (3 pages, 15%) draft due March 23, due March 29 [Prompt: Ritual, Play, and Political Action]
- Paper #5: Researched Reading Response (5 pages, 20%) draft due April 13, due April 20 [Prompt: Performativity]

### Final Exam (30%)    Due May 7, 2010

- 1) 3-4 page paper due on "Performance Processes" and Twilight: Los Angeles [Prompt: Interculturalism, Violence, and Justice]
- 2) A final revision of essay 3 or 4 and essay 5. Resubmitting these essays ensures that you not only understand the arguments being made by scholars but also are able to compare them and present an original thesis. I have attached the grading rubric at the end of this document that should guide you through the semester.

### **WEEK 1:**

T/Jan. 12, 2010      Introductory Statements

R/Jan. 14, 2010 ❖ Richard Schechner “What is Performance?” *Performance Studies: An Introduction* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (New York: Routledge, 2006): 28-51.

**WEEK 2:**

T/Jan. 19, 2010 ❖ Coco Fusco, ed. “Introduction: Latin American Performance and the Reconquista of Civil Space” *Corpus Delecti: Performance Art of the Americas* (New York: Routledge, 2000): 1-20.  
❖ Jill Lane, “Keywords in Latin American Performance” (on reserve)

**W/Jan 20, 2010 Watch: “THE COUPLE IN THE CAGE” (on blackboard)**

R/Jan. 21, 2010 ❖ Raymond Williams, “Art” “Civilization” & “Criticism”  
❖ Baz Kershaw, “Curiosity or Contempt: On Spectacle, the Human, and Activism,” *Theatre Journal* 55 (2003): 591-611.

**WEEK 3:**

T/Jan. 26, 2010 ❖ Shannon Jackson, “Culture and performance: structures of dramatic feeling” In *Professing Performance: Theatre in the Academy from Philology to Performativity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004): 79-108. (on reserve)

**Draft of Essay #1 due in section for peer-review**

R/Jan. 28, 2010 ❖ Diana Taylor, “Acts of Transfer” In *The Archive and the Repertoire* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003): 1-52. (on reserve)

**WEEK 4:**

T/Feb. 2, 2010 ❖ Dwight Conquergood, “Performance Studies Radical Interventions” (on reserve)

❖ Raymond Williams, “Culture,” “History,” & “Theory”

**Due in section: Essay #1 and discussion questions**

R/Feb. 4, 2010 ❖ Richard Schechner, “Global and Intercultural Performances” In *Performance Studies: An Introduction* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (New York: Routledge, 2006): 263-325.

**WEEK 5:**

T/Feb. 9, 2010 ❖ Clifford Geertz “Thick Description” *The Interpretation of Cultures* p.3-30. (on reserve)

**Essay #2 due in section**

**W/Feb. 10, 2010 WATCH “THE HEART BROKEN IN HALF” (screening at 7pm)**

R/Feb. 11, 2010      ❖ Raymond Williams, “City,” “Communication,” & “Underprivileged”  
❖ Susan A. Phillips, “Crip Walk, Villain Dance, Pueblo Stroll: The Embodiment of Writing in African American Gang Dance,”  
*Anthropological Quarterly* 82.1: 69-98. (on reserve)

**WEEK 6:**

T/Feb. 16, 2010      ❖ Discuss Dwight Conquergood, “Street Literacy” (on reserve)  
**Discussion Questions Due in Section**

R/Feb. 18, 2010      ❖ Discuss Dwight Conquergood, “Lethal Theatre” (on reserve)

**WEEK 7:**

T/Feb. 23, 2010      ❖ Richard Schechner, “Ritual” In *Performance Studies: An Introduction*  
2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (New York: Routledge, 2006): 52-88.  
❖ Raymond Williams, “Anthropology,” “Native,” & “Tradition”  
**Draft of Essay #3 due in section**

R/Feb. 25, 2010      ❖ Coco Fusco, ed. “Part II: Ritualizing the Body Politic” *Corpus Delecti*  
(New York: Routledge, 2000): 131-197.

**WEEK 8:**

T/Mar. 2, 2010      ❖ Richard Schechner, “Play” In *Performance Studies: An Introduction* 2<sup>nd</sup>  
ed. (New York: Routledge, 2006): 89-122.  
Raymond Williams, “Labour” & “Work”  
**Due in Section: Essay #3 and discussion question**

R/Mar. 4, 2010      ❖ Coco Fusco, ed. “Part III: “Stepping Toward an Oppositional Public  
Sphere” *Corpus Delecti* (New York: Routledge, 2000): 181-261.

**March 5, 2010      Approaching Visual Studies Panel (Attendance Mandatory)**  
**Due Tuesday: One Page Thinkpiece**

**WEEK 9:**

T/Mar. 9, 2010      ❖ Marta Munuín, “El Parthenón de Libros (1983)” In *Corpus Delecti: Performance Art of the Americas*, 200. Ed. Coco Fusco (London: Routledge, 2000).

❖ Marta Munuín, “Sunday, July 25, 1965” In *Corpus Delecti: Performance Art of the Americas*, 201-202. Ed. Coco Fusco (London: Routledge, (2000).

**Due in Section: Discussion Question**

- R/ Mar. 11, 2010      ❖ Jill Lane, “Digital Zapatista,” *The Drama Review* 47.2 (Summer 2003): 129-144. (on reserve)  
 ❖ Ricardo Dominguez, “Electronic Disturbance Theater,” In *Corpus Delecti: Performance Art of the Americas*, 259-61. Ed. Coco Fusco (London: Routledge, 2000).

**SPRING BREAK      MARCH 15-19**

**WEEK 10:**

- T/ Mar. 23, 2010      ❖ Coco Fusco, ed. “Part I: Heterotopic, Homoerotic, Hyper-Exotic Cabarets” *Corpus Delecti* (New York: Routledge, 2000): 40-96.  
**Draft of Essay #4 Due in Section**

- R/Mar. 25, 2010      ❖ Richard Schechner “Performativity” In *Performance Studies: An Introduction* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed (New York: Routledge, 2006): 123-169.

**WEEK 11:**

- M/Mar. 29, 2010      Watch: “Paris is Burning” (on blackboard)**  
**Due in Section: Essay #4 and discussion questions**

- T/ Mar. 30, 2010      ❖ Raymond Williams, “Originality,” “Materialism,” & “Aesthetics”  
 ❖ Judith Butler, “Gender is Burning: Questions of Appropriation and Subversion,” In *Bodies that Matter* (New York: Routledge, 1993): 121-140.

- R/ Apr. 1, 2010      ❖ Don Kulick, “Introduction” & “The Context of Travesti Life” *Travesti: Sex, Gender, and Culture among Brazilian Transgendered Prostitutes* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998): 1-43.

**WEEK 12:**

- T/ Apr. 6, 2010      ❖ Don Kulick, “Becoming a Travesti” *Travesti: Sex, Gender, and Culture among Brazilian Transgendered Prostitutes* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998): 44-95.  
 Due in Section: Discussion Questions

- R/Apr. 8, 2010      ❖ Don Kulick, “A Man in the House” & “The Pleasure of Prostitution” *Travesti: Sex, Gender, and Culture among Brazilian Transgendered Prostitutes* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998): 96-190.

**WEEK 13:**

- T/Apr. 13, 2010      ❖ Don Kulick, “Travesti Gendered Subjectivity” *Travesti: Sex, Gender, and Culture among Brazilian Transgendered Prostitutes* (Chicago:

University of Chicago Press, 1998): 191-238.

**Due in Section: Draft of Essay #5 for peer-review**

R/Apr. 15, 2010      ❖ Micaela di Leonardo and Roger Lancaster, eds. "Introduction: Embodied Meanings, Carnal Practices," In *The Gender Sexuality Reader: Culture, History, Political Economy* (New York: Routledge, 1997): 1-10. (on reserve)

❖ Roger Lancaster, "Guto's Performance," In *The Gender Sexuality Reader: Culture, History, Political Economy* (New York: Routledge, 1997): 559-74. (on reserve)

#### **WEEK 14:**

T/ Apr. 20, 2010      ❖ Richard Schechner, "Performance Processes" In *Performance Studies: An Introduction 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.* (New York: Routledge, 2006): 221-262.  
**Due in Section: Essay #5**

**W/Apr. 21, 2010      Film Screening: Watch Twilight Los Angeles (screening at 7pm)**

R/Apr. 22, 2010      ❖ Raymond Williams, "Violence," "Community," & "Racial"  
❖ Discuss Twilight Los Angeles

#### **WEEK 15:**

T/Apr. 27, 2010      Final Remarks

**FINAL EXAM DUE: MAY 7, 2010 at 2108 G Street NW (box under the stairs)**

#### **IMPORTANT EXTRA INFORMATION**

##### **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

I personally support the GW Code of Academic Integrity. It states: "Academic dishonesty is defined as cheating of any kind, including misrepresenting one's own work, taking credit for the work of others without crediting them and without appropriate authorization, and the fabrication of information." For the remainder of the code, see:

<http://www.gwu.edu/~ntegrity/code.html>

##### **SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM**

##### **DISABILITY SUPPORT SERVICES (DSS)**

Any student who may need an accommodation based on the potential impact of a disability should contact the Disability Support Services office at 202-994-8250 in the Marvin Center, Suite 242, to establish eligibility and to coordinate reasonable accommodations. For additional information please refer to: <http://gwired.gwu.edu/dss/>

UNIVERSITY COUNSELING CENTER (UCC) 202-994-5300

The University Counseling Center (UCC) offers 24/7 assistance and referral to address students' personal, social, career, and study skills problems. Services for students include:

- crisis and emergency mental health consultations
- confidential assessment, counseling services (individual and small group), and referrals

<http://gwired.gwu.edu/counsel/CounselingServices/AcademicSupportServices>

#### SECURITY

In the case of an emergency, if at all possible, the class should shelter in place. If the building that the class is in is affected, follow the evacuation procedures for the building. After evacuation, seek shelter at a predetermined rendezvous location.

## **Grading Rubric:**

### **A** paper demonstrates the student (90-100)

- can synthesize the arguments being made by scholars and sustain a dialogue with them using an original research question
- can conduct research that is attentive to the historical, political, economic, and cultural contexts and integrate details and examples of that work in a polished form. This includes citing sources and using quotes that strengthen your argument but do not speak for you.
- can organize ideas in a logical manner and can lead the reader through the paper with transitions between paragraphs.
- can follow grammatical conventions of writing. This includes: inclusion of title, full title page, numbering pages, proper footnote or endnote citation, etc.

### **B** paper demonstrates the student (80-89)

- understands the arguments being made by scholars
- attempts to advance an original research question distinct from the authors but does not fully develop one as would be found in an “A” paper
- can conduct research but does not fully integrate sources into the paper in a way that strengthens the thesis
- can organize ideas but does not provide a framework with articulate transitions, main ideas, and supporting material
- has paid attention to grammar in a partial way

### **C** paper demonstrates the student (70-79)

- understands most aspects the arguments being made by scholars but does not convey it in a convincing manner
- does not advance an original thesis/argument but provides a descriptive essay or a “book report”
- has not conducted sufficient research to advance an argument that is distinct from those provided in the assigned texts
- has paid little attention to grammar (i.e. lacking title page, page numbers, footnotes, etc.)

### **D** paper demonstrates the student (60-69)

- does not really grasp significant aspects of the arguments being made by scholars
- makes some points but does not organize them in a cogent way
- has not revised the paper sufficiently (i.e. numerous grammatical mistakes)

### **F** (59 and below)

- A paper that is not turned in, and/or shows no knowledge of the material studied.

### **BRIEF OVERVIEW OF ASSIGNMENTS**

**Discussion Questions:** Discussion questions are due in section on weeks when no other essay is assigned. In completing this semi-weekly assignment, you should create questions that will spark a lively class discussion and that demonstrate that you have both completed and comprehended the assigned readings. On days when discussion questions are due, you must bring your questions to class, printed out, and turn them in.

**PAPER #1, PERSONAL REFLECTION ESSAY (1-2 PAGE):** This essay asks that students write a brief personal reflection on the course's readings to date. Select an idea or argument from our readings and apply it to better understand a personal experience with performance or an aspect of performance on the GWU campus.

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES:** Practice applying a theoretical concept to a specific real-life context; demonstrate reading comprehension; and practice making a coherent, persuasive claim in a limited amount of space.

**GRADING CRITERIA:** This paper will be graded on a scale of check plus, check, check minus. A successful paper will contain a well-chosen example and will offer insight into the norms and values of the GWU campus. An exceptional paper will do the above with a creative flare and impeccably well-edited prose

**Paper #2, Ruminatio (1-2 pages):** Your second task will be to write a brief rumination on the readings by ----- . Begin by summarizing, in 1-3 sentences, his or her central argument and then delve into any aspect of the text that you find compelling.

**Paper #3 and #4, Response Papers (3 pages):** We will write two response papers as the semester progresses. For these short essays, you will be asked to demonstrate an understanding of the reading's main ideas and reflect critically on an aspect that interests you.

**Paper #5: Research Response Paper (5pages):** This cumulative essay will include a small research component. Specifics will be discussed during lecture.